

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PANAMA 04823 081904Z

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 AF-06 EA-06 EUR-12 NEA-10 SAB-01

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FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4776

INFO PANCANAL

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: PANAMA TO JOIN THE NON-ALIGNED AUGUST 24

1. TWICE WITHIN THIS WEEK PANAMA HAS ANNOUNCED IT WILL JOIN THE NON-ALIGNED GROUP OF NATIONS. MINISTER OF EDUCATION ARISTIDES ROYO, ATTENDING A CENTRAL AMERICAN EDUCATION MINISTERS MEETING IN GUATEMALA, DECLARED ON AUG. 3 THAT GOP AND PANAMANIAN PEOPLE HAVE DECIDED TO BECOME TRULY INDEPENDENT, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD, AND HENCE WILL ESTABLISH RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES AND ADHERE TO NON-ALIGNED GROUP. LATE YESTERDAY (AUG. 7) CHIEF OF GOVERNMENT TORRIJOS ANNOUNCED PANAMA WILL JOIN NON-ALIGNED BLOC IN ITS NEXT MEETING SET FOR AUG. 24 IN LIMA. MINISTER-NEGOTIATOR TACK WILL HEAD PANAMA'S DELEGATION TO THE MEETING.

COMMENT: TORRIJOS HAS NOW PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED DECISION TO JOIN NON-ALIGNED BLOC. PRECURSORS TO IT WERE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF CORREGIMIENTO REPRESENTATIVES RESOLUTION OF JULY 18 URGING GOP TO TAKE THIS STEP, AND ROYO'S STATEMENT LAST SUNDAY. THESE INDICATIONS AND YESTERDAY'S CONFIRMATION SHOULD BE VIEWED AS PART OF PANAMA'S RESPONSE TO ITS INITIAL INTERPRETATION THAT SNYDER AMENDMENT AND PRESS REPORTS FROM WHITE HOUSE LAST MONTH INFERRED WEAKENING OF U.S. DETERMINATION TO CONCLUDE A LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 02 PANAMA 04823 081904Z

MUTUALLY SATISFACTORY TREATY WITH PANAMA. ESTABLISHMENT OF

DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH THE SOVIET UNION, THE PEOPLE'S
REPUBLIC OF CHINA AND OTHER SOCIALIST COUNTRIES IS A LOGICAL
CONSEQUENCE OF GOP'S PORTRAYAL OF ITSELF AS A "REVOLUTIONARY"
GOVERNMENT AND OF ITS POLITICAL NEED TO ASSERT ITS INDE-
PENDENCE FROM THE UNITED STATES. IT HAS SUCCESSFULLY
TRANSFORMED ITS STRUGGLE TO ELIMINATE U.S. "IMPERIALISM" IN
THE CANAL ZONE INTO A THIRD-WORLD ISSUE. NEVERTHELESS, PANAMA
HAS REFRAINED UNTIL NOW FROM OPENING RELATIONS WITH THE USSR
AND PRC, FEARING US DISAPPROVAL. WHAT HAS PREVIOUSLY BEEN A
CARROT MAY NOW BECOME A STICK TO BE USED IN PRODDING THE
U.S., BUT ONLY A "VICTORY" IN THE TREATY NEGOTIATIONS WILL
FULLY MANIFEST PANAMA'S "INDEPENDENCE", AND LESSEN THE NEED
TO DEMONSTRATE IT BY SYMBOLIC ACTS.

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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